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A
S E R M O N

Occasioned by the

D E A T H

Of the REVEREND

Mr. JOHN HURRION,

Who departed this LIFE
December 31st, 1731.

The Substance whereof was preached
to the Church of which he was
PASTOR, the 9th of *January*
following.

By THOMAS RIDGLEY.

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W. Thurgrove



JOHN V. 35.

He was a burning and a shining light, and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

WHEN the great God, in whose hand is our life and breath, is pleased to call home any of his useful and faithful servants, it is natural for us to consider how great a loss we have sustained, and, in order thereunto, to call to mind what he was whose labours we are deprived of. This our Saviour did, when he gave an honourable character of *John* the Baptist, whom he represents, as one that had born a testimony to the truth^a, which was indeed the great design of his ministry; and, in our text, he adds concerning him, *He was a burning and a shining Light.*

'Tis uncertain whether *John* was now alive or no: Some think that these words

^a Ver. 33.

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were spoken after his death; but all agree that ~~if they were not spoken after his death,~~ they were after his imprisonment, when his usefulness seem'd to be at an end. The character given him is great, yet such as he certainly deserved, if ever any man in the world did: He is stiled *a Light*^b. The word here used is less emphatical than that which is elsewhere apply'd to our Saviour, and therefore it is said concerning him, *He was not that light*^c. He was not the *sun of righteousness*, as Christ was, who was to *arise with healing in his wings*, but like the morning-star that went before it; or as it is elsewhere said, he *was to go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways*^d; and he might be well stiled *a Light*, inasmuch as he was *to give knowledge of salvation unto his people*^e, that is, the knowledge of that salvation which Christ was come to procure for them.

Moreover, he is called a *burning Light*, that is, one who was full of love to God, and zeal for his glory and interest; and a *shining Light*, that is, one whose conversation recommended his profession, or one whose usefulness was very extensive in publishing the gospel.

'Tis farther added, *Ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light*; which either

^b Λύχνος, *Lucerna*.
i. 76.

^c Ver. 77.

^e John i. 8. τὸ φῶς

^d Luke

signifies, that they were favour'd with his ministry but for a little while ; for this light was to be extinguish'd soon after Christ's publick appearance in the world, that he might not give occasion to any to conclude that he was a sharer with him in his work or glory : or else the words may be understood as containing a tacit reproof, intimating, that when *John* came at first preaching and baptizing, they rejoiced in his ministry, to wit, while they thought that he was giving them notice of a glorious King, that should procure for them those secular advantages which they expected to attend his kingdom ; but when the Messiah appeared in a low condition, and discover'd that his kingdom was not of this world, as they were offended in him, so *John's* ministry, from that time, was contemn'd and disregarded by them.

The words being thus briefly explain'd, we shall endeavour to consider them in this method.

I. As they immediately respect *John* the Baptist, and his ministry, together with the consequences thereof, with respect to his hearers.

II. As they contain a just *Idea* of a gospel-minister in general, relating to his character, his qualifications, and the season of his usefulness. And then,

III. We

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III. We shall apply this to the present melancholy occasion of our meeting together.

I. We shall consider the words, as they more immediately respect *John* the Baptist in the exercise of his ministry, who is described as *a burning and a shining light*. God called him to a very great work, to be, as it were, an herald, to proclaim the appearing of the great Messiah; and he was admirably well qualify'd for this service, as appears from his character as laid down in scripture.

1. He is stiled *a prophet*^f; and therefore, in this respect, he appeared with great advantage; since the people could not but entertain his ministry with some pleasure, inasmuch as the Spirit of prophecy^g, which had been lost for some ages, since the prophet *Malachi's* time, was now reviv'd. That he was a prophet, is evident, from what is said by the evangelist *Luke*, that *the word of God came to him*^h; which is the same mode of expression that is used to denote

^f Luke vii. 26.

^g We suppose the Spirit of prophecy lost from *Malachi's* time; though *Josephus* speaks of some persons who occasionally had a prophetick intimation of things by a voice from heaven, *Vid. Antiq. Lib. XHI. cap. 18.* or predicted some particular occurrences, which came to pass accordingly, *Vid. ejusd. Lib. XI. cap. 8. & Lib. XV. cap. 13.* However these, and such-like occasional instances, did not induce the *Jews* to conclude that the Spirit of prophecy was then reviv'd; nor had these persons the character of prophets.

^h Chap. iii. 2.

the commission given to other prophets; particularly to *Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel*ⁱ; and he says, concerning himself, that God sent him to baptize with water^k, and gave him an intimation that Christ, whose messenger he was, should be fully evinced to be the Son of God, by the Spirit's ascending and descending upon him, and his conferring on his people the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, which is call'd *baptizing with the Holy Ghost*; and all this came to pass accordingly.

What way God took to give conviction to the world that *John* was endowed with the Spirit of prophecy, cannot easily be determined, especially since it is said, that he *did no miracle*^l, as some other prophets before had done, to confirm their mission; and the waiting for the accomplishment of any thing he might predict, would not give them a sufficient conviction as to this matter for the present: But what way soever the people came to the knowledge hereof, 'tis expressly said, that *all men counted John that he was a prophet indeed*^m: And our Saviour, speaking concerning him, not only gives him the honour of a prophet, but says, that *he was more than a prophet*ⁿ; a greater prophet than any that went before him, because they only foretold the coming of Christ, whereas *John* declar'd that he was

ⁱ Jer. i. 2. Ezek. i. 3.
x, 41.

^m Mark xi. 32.

^k John i. 33.

ⁿ Matt. xi. 9.

^l Chap.

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actually come, and would soon appear publicly amongst them; yet he adds, *He that is least in the kingdom of heaven*, where he has reference to the apostles, or those that should exercise their ministry after Christ's ascension into heaven, should be *greater than he*ⁿ; for they were to declare Christ to have finish'd his work, whereas the former were only to signify that he would, or was actually engaged in it; by which expression our Saviour does not so much respect the personal character of the prophets, whom he compares together, as the subject-matter of their prophecy. Thus having consider'd *John's* general character as a prophet, we may farther observe,

2. That in the discharge of his ministry he shun'd all applause, or secular advantages that the world might confer on, or present to him: Thus our Saviour says concerning him, *Did you go out into the wilderness to see a man cloathed in soft raiment? or in gorgeous apparel, like those that live delicately, and are in kings courts*^o? *John* never affected this way of living; and therefore it is elsewhere observed, that *he had his raiment of camels hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat was locusts and wild boney*^p, such food as the wilderness afforded him, or those villages that were situate in it, which were the places of his

ⁿ Matt. xi. 11.

^o Luke vii. 25.

^p Matt. iii. 4.

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residence; for he did not choose to live in great cities, but the people came from them into the wilderness to attend on his ministry, hearing the fame of a great prophet, raised up and sent to deliver an extraordinary message from God. This was that which gain'd him the esteem of the people, so long as they were *willing to rejoice in his light*, without any advantage arising from the least external pomp and grandeur, which, in the whole course of his ministry, he studiously avoided.

3. He was a man of great faithfulness and integrity; was not in the least disposed to dissemble with, or flatter the greatest men on earth. And this was agreeable to what was foretold concerning him, that he should come *in the Spirit and power of Elias*⁹; and of all the prophets under the Old Testament-dispensation, none were more faithful than him; he did no more spare *Abab* and *Jezabel*, than he would do the meanest subject in their dominions, when they rebel'd against, and revolted from their God: So *John* the Baptist was a second *Elias*; one whose character agreed with his, in that he knew not how to give place to any one out of favour or affection, nor to spare, or neglect to reprove, those who were men of figure in the world, because of their condition and circumstances therein.

⁹ Luke i. 17.

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This was evident, from the manner of his address to those who attended on his ministry: It is said, that when the multitude came forth to be baptized of him, he was so far from passing over, or palliating those crimes which they had been guilty of, or paying a deference to them for their seeming zeal in attending on his ministry, that he gives them no better a character than that of a *generation of vipers*, enquiring *who had warned them to flee from the wrath to come*. This was what they justly deserved; for both they and their fathers had persecuted the prophets, and, as one observes, appeared to be no other than the seed of the serpent^r. Thus *Luke* represents him, as speaking to the multitude; but *Matthew* says, it was particularly address'd to the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*^c; which either argues that there was a very great number of them that attended on his ministry; or, at least, while he considers the multitude

^r The word γεννημασιν is in the plural number, and therefore signifies that they were of the same temper with their Fathers. See *Lightfoot, Harm. &c. Vol. I. pag. 458, 459.* And our Saviour occasionally styles them *serpents*, and a *generation of vipers*; and adds, *How can ye escape the damnation of hell?* And, in *Matt. xxiii. 31—35.* speaking concerning their scourging and persecuting the prophets and wise men that were sent unto them, tells them, that *all the righteous blood, that their fathers, who were of the same temper with them, had shed, should come upon them*; which not only explains what is meant by the character which is given them, of a *generation of vipers*, but sufficiently accounts for the reason of its being put in the plural number.

^c *Luke iii. 7.* compared with *Matt. iii. 7.*

in general, as liable to this charge, he re-
proves the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*, as per-
sons who were most guilty. And herein he
regards not the pretensions to learning and
piety in the one, whereby they gained an
universal esteem amongst the people, nor
the figure that the other made in the
world, though without the like pretensions
thereunto: But when he says, *Who hath*
warned you to flee from the wrath to come?
'tis probable he does not hereby intend that
they had an immediate design in attending
on his ministry, to escape the judgments that
would befall that generation; for they had
no notion of the utter ruin of their state and
nation, which would ensue upon their re-
jecting the Messiah: But *John* seems to in-
timate this; and therefore tells them, that,
by that readiness which they then express'd
to receive him, they acted as though they
desired to prevent those judgments, that
wrath might not come upon that nation;
nevertheless, says he, though you act as
though you had been warn'd to flee from
the wrath to come, this will be to no pur-
pose, unless you *bring forth fruits meet for*
repentance.

And, as a farther instance of his faithful-
ness, he touches them in the most tender
part, and overthrows their vain boast and
great expectations from their being the seed
of *Abraham*, when he says, *Think not to say*

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we have Abraham for our father^t, which he could not but suppose would exasperate them to the last degree ; however, this he values not, but proceeds to tell them, that *God was able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham* ; and when they dream'd of nothing but earthly felicity, he tells them, *The ax was laid to the root of the tree* ; intimating, that God would bring those judgments upon his people, that they should be like a tree, cut down from the very root, if they continued in a state of impenitency and unbelief ; and he speaks also of the Messiah, as having *his fan in his hand*, and that *he would thoroughly purge his floor* ; denoting, that when the *Jewish* nation was dispers'd and scatter'd, as the chaff is driven away by the wind, yet there should be a remnant according to the election of grace, which God would have a peculiar regard to, whom he *would gather like wheat into his garner*. This could not but be very disagreeable doctrine ; nevertheless, he did not shun to declare it to them, which was an uncommon instance of faithfulness in the discharge of the important work which he was engaged in.

4. He was a person of very great humility, and far from usurping any branch of Christ's glory : He had the greatest oppor-

^t Matt. iii. 9, 10, 12.

tunity in the world to have imposed himself as the Messiah; for it is plain the *Jews* were inclined, at first, to believe that he was so, as appears from the message he received from the *Sanhedrim*, who sent *Priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him who art thou* ^u? In answer whereunto it is said, *He confessed and denied not, but confessed I am not the Christ*: It is with good reason that the Holy Ghost uses this way of speaking; if you call it a tautology, it is a very beautiful one; *He confessed and denied not, but confessed I am not the Christ*. There are several words used to shew that *John* was very zealous in asserting that he was not the Christ, and that he would not give them the least umbrage or ground to conclude that he thought himself to be the Messiah.

And, upon another occasion, when *John's* disciples seem'd to envy Christ that esteem which he then had in the world, and complain to this effect; *He to whom thou bearest witness, behold the same baptizeth, and all men come to him* ^w; the reply he makes to them is an argument of his great humility: "I told you before (says he) that I am not the Christ, and I tell you now that he is the Messiah; he has a right to the church; he is the *Bridegroom* thereof: "As for me, I am only his *friend* ^x, who "rejoice to bear his voice; am ready,

^u John i. 19, 20.

^w Chap. iii. 26.

^x Ver. 29.

" with

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“ with pleasure, to receive that gospel which
 “ he came to publish. You seem to be dis-
 “ pleased that he is so popular, and that I
 “ begin to lose that reputation which I
 “ have had among the uncertain multitude.
 “ This (says he) I not only submit to, but
 “ it is absolutely necessary that it should be
 “ so; *He must increase, but I must decrease*^y,
 “ It is necessary that his glory should be
 “ proclaimed, and his name advanced; there-
 “ fore I am not only easy, but rejoice, that
 “ all the honour I have, should be laid at
 “ his feet.” And, concerning him, he
 more than once says, *The latchet of his
 shoes I am not worthy to unloose*^z: What a
 noble testimony does he give; and with what
 humility does he decline all opportunities
 of usurping his honour, whose fore-runner
 he was? And to this we may add,

5. That he discharged his ministry with
 the greatest steadfastness. Thus our Saviour
 says concerning him, *Did ye go out to see a
 reed shaken with the wind*^a? Did you see in
 him a man apt to change his sentiments of
 persons or things? Did he at one time de-
 stroy what at another he pretended to build
 up? No, he was not a man of that temper;
 neither was he lifted up with popular ap-
 plause at one time, nor depress’d or tempted
 to decline his duty, by reproach or persecu-

^y John iii. 30.
 vii. 24.

^z Mark i. 7. Luke iii. 16.

^a Chap.

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tion, at another ; but was always pursuing the same design, whatever might be the consequences of it; upon all which accounts it may well be said, concerning him, *He was a burning and a shining light.* Thus concerning *John's* character.

We now proceed to consider what is said concerning them that attended on his ministry, to whom our Saviour says, *Ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.* The time of *John's* exercising his ministry was very short, as may be infer'd from the gospel-history relating to him: He set out in his work about half a year before our Saviour enter'd on his ministry^b, and for about a year and an half after Christ's baptism and publick appearance in the world, while he went about doing good, and confirming his mission by miracles, *John* continued preaching and baptizing till he was cast into prison, wherein he was detained for about a year and an half, and was cut off by *Herod*, a little above a year before our Saviour, and therefore the world enjoy'd his ministry but *for a season.*

As for the people's behaviour towards him, which is principally intended in this expression. The delight and pleasure they took in his ministry, seems to have continued but a little above the first half year thereof, while our Saviour was not

^b See *Lightfoot, Harm. &c.* Vol. I. p. 208, 209.

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publicly known in the world, but expected by them. While *John* did only inform them that the Messiah should be shortly manifested to them; that is, before his public baptism, 'tis not to be wonder'd that they express'd the greatest pleasure in hearing this doctrine, inasmuch as they were very sensible of that yoke that was laid on them from the time that they were made tributary to the *Roman* empire, having not only lost the sceptre, but, in a manner, the law-giver; the *Sanhedrim*, slain by *Herod*; the high priesthood confer'd by that arbitrary tyrant, as *Josephus*^c observes, either by favour or bribery on persons that were alto-

^c *Herod's* reign, which was long and grievous, was a constant series of tyranny and oppression: He began it with the murder of the *Sanhedrim*, [See *Joseph. Antiq. Lib. XIV. cap. 17.*] and towards the end of it he slew the infants of *Bethlehem*, [Matt. ii.] and at his death he order'd, that the chief of the nobility should be slain, that the universal rejoicing which he expected there would then ensue, might be allay'd, by their losing the flower of the nation, [See *Antiq. Lib. XVII. cap. 8.*] And as to his advancing to and deposing from the high priesthood, disqualify'd persons at pleasure, this *Josephus* also mentions, which occasioned a great many of them to succeed one another, while their predecessors were living, in a short space of time, [See *Lightfoot* on the succession of the High Priests, cap. 4. § 3. Vol. I. p 910.] And this gives some light to what we often meet with in the gospels, concerning several persons who were called chief *Priests* at the same time; and these instances of tyranny, as well as the many barbarities he exercised, under a pretence of their being disposed to make insurrections, and refusing to pay tribute to *Cesar*, and several other instances of their servitude to the *Roman* empire, could not but make them uneasy, and desire to be deliver'd from it by the Messiah, whom they expected to come with that design.

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gether disqualified for it by the laws of God, and these he deposed at pleasure, to make room for any new favourite that could make an interest to obtain that honourable and important office. Now when the *Jews* first heard of the Messiah's appearing, they expected a very great turn of affairs; and not only to be deliver'd from those burdens that were laid on them, as to their secular concerns; but to be advanced to great honours under him, whose kingdom they apprehended to be of this world.

And, besides this, it is certain they were at that time in universal expectation of the Messiah's coming. The *Sanhedrim*, as is plain from the gospel-history^d, very justly infer'd it from what was foretold concerning this matter by the prophets, and particularly the prophet *Daniel*, who fixes the exact number of years in a mystical way, and calls them *seventy weeks*^e; after which the Messiah should appear to *finish transgression, make an end of sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness*. And, indeed, it was a very easy matter for any one, who pretended himself to be the Messiah, to gain multitudes after him^f; which would have been

^d Matt. ii. 1.

^e Dan. ix. 24, & seq.

^f This is not only evident from scripture, particularly our Saviour's words, in *John* x. 8. *All that ever came before me, are thieves and robbers*; and what is said elsewhere, in *Acts* v. 36, 37. concerning Theudas and Judas of Galilee, to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: But

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been altogether impracticable, had they not at that time been in expectation of the Messiah, which was so universally received amongst them, that it was impossible for it to remain a secret ; and therefore the Hea- then themselves were apprehensive of it, as appears from some hints which we have in their writings ; namely, that the *Jews* were at that time in expectation of one who would make a turn in the *Roman* empire^s ; and therefore the Governor look'd with an evil eye upon them. And the *Jewish* historian^h supposes that this was the principal occasion of *Herod's* imprisoning *John* the Baptist, because he was jealous that he, being a popular man, who had multitudes adhering to him, would make some turn in the affairs of the civil government ; so that you may easily understand what is meant by their being *willing to rejoice in his light* ; they were glad at first to hear the doctrine of the Messiah : but this was but *for a season* ; for they were no sooner offended in Christ, but *John* began to lose his esteem amongst them, though, 'tis true, there were some who adhered to him as long as he lived, and afterwards they did not care to

from the account which *Josephus* gives us, *Yos. Antiq. Lib. XVII. cap. 12.* and *Lib. XX. cap. 2.* & *alibi passim*, of the various insurrections that happen'd about that time by some who drew multitudes after them, pretending that they were the Messiah.

^s *Vid. Sueton. in Vespas. & Tacit. Histor. Lib. V.*

^h *Vid. Yos. Ant. Lib. XVIII. cap. 7.*

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hear him spoken against in a publick manner ; for they had a testimony in their own consciences that he was a man of uncommon excellency, and *all*, that is, the greatest part of them, *accounted him as a prophet*ⁱ. And even *Herod*, his murderer, was struck with such a panick fear, when he heard of the miracles wrought by our Saviour, supposing him to be *John* the Baptist, risen from the dead, that his conscience seemed to make him uneasy with a sense of the guilt which he had contracted by his murder^k ; yet he and the generality of the people being given up to judicial blindness, wore of the sense of it ; and *John's* ministry, as well as their regard to Christ, who was the great subject thereof, expired together ; so that they rejoiced in it but *for a season*. This leads us,

II. To consider the words, as they give us a just *Idea* of a gospel-minister, his character, his qualifications, and the various instances of his being favour'd with, or denied success. Such an one ought to be a burning and a shining light, to have a great love to God, to Christ, and his gospel, and a zeal for his glory, should endeavour, to the utmost of his power, to propagate and spread the knowledge of Christ, in the station in

ⁱ Mark xi, 32.

^k Mat. xiv. 2.

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which providence has pleased to fix him. Now in considering this character, we may observe the various steps in which they ought to proceed, who desire to be faithful, or approv'd and esteem'd as burning and shining lights.

1. They ought to consider the personal obligations they are under to love Christ, and to act for his interest and glory. The grace of God, when it renders a person a faithful minister, first reaches his heart, and makes him sensible of his personal obligations to the blessed Jesus: When therefore God is furnishing, or training up any one for this important service, and designs in his own time to call him to it, he impresses on his soul a sense of redeeming love, makes him partaker of that grace which is discriminating, that works a change in all the powers and faculties of his soul; so that he tastes what it is to have fellowship with the Father; and with his Son Jesus Christ, whereby he is qualified to declare not only what is contain'd in the word, but what is matter of his own experience.

2. He is impress'd with a due sense of the obligations he is laid under to endeavour to promote Christ's interest in the world, which he accounts the most useful, important, and honourable service that he can be employ'd in; the most valuable end of life, and the best return of gratitude
that

that he can make for that grace which he has received from him. And pursuant hereunto,

3. He gives up himself entirely, and without reserve to be his servant. " Lord (says he) I am thine, to all intents and purposes; do with me as seemeth good in thy sight. If thou wilt be pleas'd to employ so mean an instrument in so great a work, I heartily embrace it, as knowing that I am not mine own, but thine. Hast thou a design to favour the world with the knowledge of Christ, and him crucified, and to communicate to sinners the mystery of thy will, as display'd in the work of redemption? And wilt thou impart to them those glad tidings which the angels desire to look into and admire, and that by persons so unequal to this work, as well as unworthy of it? this is the best employment, as it is an expedient, to advance thy glory, and signify the constraints which the love of Christ has laid me under, to express my love to him, and regard to his honour and interest : *Here am I, send me.*"

4. He considers the difficulty of the work of the ministry, and the many discouragements he is like to meet with, as well as the advantages he hopes to receive in the discharge of his duty; what encouragement he may expect from God, and what ill treatment from men. He sets before himself

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the bright and dark side of the cloud, the evil and the good; and that which determines him in this matter, is a sense of duty; and therefore whatever difficulties or discouragements lie in his way, he, having given up himself to God, desires to approve himself to him, as one on whom *necessity is laid*, and such inducements offer'd, that it would be the highest ingratitude and rebellion should he refuse, to *preach the gospel*¹. Does he foresee the great opposition that he is like to meet with, particularly, from those who cannot endure sound doctrine, as well as from others, to whom he is like to become an enemy, for telling them the truth, or give disgust by faithful reproofs? Is he apprehensive of the enmity there is in the nature of man to practical godliness, which it is his business to endeavour to promote? this tempts him to say with *Moses*, *Send by the hand of him whom thou wilt send*^m; q. d. thou art never at a loss for instruments to employ in this work; let some others engage in it who are better qualified for it: But, in answer thereunto, he considers the many promises of assistance, whereby he shall be enabled to surmount all difficulties, and find acceptance, how mean soever his performances may be, if proceeding from a sincere desire to bring glory to God's name: He takes encouragement from what our Saviour says,

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 16.

^m Exod. iv. 13.

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Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world ⁿ, and depends upon the accomplishment of that promise, *As thy days, so shall thy strength be* ^o: And as the work is God's, so he trusts that he will own and succeed him in it, carry him through it, pass by the many weaknesses and failings which he may be guilty of, and deal with him as with those to whom he will say, *Well done, good and faithful servants* ^p.

5. They who may be stiled, *burning and shining lights*, must have those qualifications that are necessary for the great work they are engaged in, without which it is impossible that they should impart to others the knowledge of divine truth in a right way. We shall not here consider those qualifications that are ornamental and less necessary, or which are adapted to please, rather than profit; so that persons may be found in the faith, and their ministry have a tendency to do good, and far from being liable to contempt, who are, nevertheless, destitute of them. And as to the degree of a person's fitness for this work, it is certain, that they who excel many others, must be supposed, as the apostle speaks, to *know but in part, and to prophesy in part* ^q; and all have reason to say, *Who is sufficient for these things* ^r? But yet these may be stiled, notwithstanding,

ⁿ Matt. xxviii. 20.
xxv. 23.

^o Deut. xxxiii. 25.

^p Matt.

^q 1 Cor. xiii. 9.

^r 2 Cor. ii. 16.

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burning and shining lights, and made very useful to lead men into the knowledge of divine things. And, in order hereunto, it is necessary,

(1.) That they be sufficiently instructed themselves in the great doctrines of the gospel, otherwise it is impossible for them *rightly to divide the word of truth*^f, and to *convince the gainsayers*^g, which the apostle assigns, as qualifications necessary for this work; therefore they ought to be like the *scribe* our Saviour speaks of^h, *which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven*, and to be able, out of their *treasures*, to *bring forth things new and old*. This knowledge cannot be attained without searching the scriptures, making them our constant study, and endeavouring to know the mind of God contain'd therein; otherwise they may call that a doctrine founded on scripture, which is contrary to it, and lead people out of the way, instead of giving light to them. This is a work of great difficulty; and, in order to our proceeding successfully herein, we must consider some general rules, by which the sense we give of scripture, and the doctrines we deduce from thence, must be tried, namely, that they be agreeable to the divine perfections, and the analogy of faith, and also tend to promote practical godliness.

^f 2 Tim. ii. 15.
52.

^g Tit. i. 9.

^h Matt. xiii.

1st. Every doctrine ought to be agreeable to the divine perfections; therefore that which tends to cast a reproach either on the essential glory of God, or the personal glory of the Father, Son, and Spirit, is altogether disagreeable to scripture, the great design whereof is to set forth these perfections. Moreover, every doctrine that tends to disparage the grace of God, as though it were not free and sovereign, nor the whole of our salvation to be ascribed to it; or the purpose of God, as though it were mutable, and depended on the will of man, in order to its being executed; or his power, as though it were to be controuled, resisted, or render'd ineffectual, by the obstinacy and rebellion of men, as though the providence of God had nothing to do with it, or he had given us powers and faculties, which he could not, or would not govern; such doctrines as these are not agreeable to the divine perfections, and therefore must not be supposed to contain a true sense of scripture.

2^{dly}. Those doctrines are not founded on scripture that are contrary to the analogy of faith. For the understanding of what we intend hereby, it is to be supposed that no one, who is called to instruct others, is chargeable himself with scepticism, or at a loss to determine what is the mind and will of God, as though he knew not where to set his foot, or hesitated about those great

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and important doctrines, which are not mentioned occasionally in scripture, but are plainly reveal'd therein, and are to be found almost in every part of it ; so that we must recede from the known and generally received sense of words if we deny them. These doctrines we are supposed to believe ; and therefore whatever sense of scripture, is not agreeable thereunto, has a tendency to sap the foundation of our faith, which we must either lay aside, and that we cannot easily do, because of scripture-evidence ; or else we must explain every other doctrine we embrace in consistency therewith. Thus if we can prove, by undeniable arguments, that man is guilty before God, and that this guilt cannot be removed but by an atonement made for it ; and that this atonement was really made by the obedience and death of Christ, and that our justification and right to eternal life is founded upon it : Whatever doctrine tends to subvert this, is contrary to the analogy of faith.

If it be objected, that that which is agreeable to my faith is not a standard to that of others, I will not deny this : But that which is so, is a rule by which I proceed in judging of the truth of doctrines, and consequently in giving the sense of those scriptures that are suppos'd to maintain them ; so that persons must either wholly lay aside these doctrines, or explain all others consistently with them. And to this we may add,

3^{dly}. That whatever sense we give of scripture, must have a tendency to promote practical godliness. Therefore no doctrine is to be reckon'd true that leads to licentiousness, nor is any inference deduced from it just that has a tendency thereunto; and consequently the necessity of holiness, its connection with salvation, and the obligations which all are under to the performance of every duty which God commands, by faith, which derives strength from Christ, in hope of obtaining the end hereof, even the salvation of our souls, are to be insisted on, and all scripture explain'd agreeably thereunto; or else a person must be supposed to be destitute of that light which will qualify him to lead others into the knowledge of divine things.

(2) In communicating those truths to others, which are deduced from, and contained in scripture, they, who have a right to the character we are considering, must endeavour, to the utmost of their ability, to declare the whole counsel of God: This the apostle says he had not *shunned to do*^w, and that he had *kept back nothing that was profitable* to the church of God^x. There are some persons who appear to deliver nothing that can be directly charged as contrary to the rule of faith, who yet neglect, or at least are very sparing, in declaring some important truths. It is possible to entertain an au-

^w Acts xx. 27.

^x Ver. 20.

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dience for an hour with such a discourse, that they, who are either friends or enemies to the gospel, might deliver, without any inconsistency with their own scheme of doctrine. It cannot be said that it is not truth: but yet it may justly be said that it is not the whole truth that ought to be deliver'd.

If we inculcate the necessity of our practising those moral virtues that are founded in the law of nature, and necessary in the conduct of our lives; or our obligation to abstain from those immoralities, which are a reproach to those rational faculties, with which we are endowed; these things are, doubtless, necessary to be insisted on: Nevertheless, we ought not, at the same time, to forget that there are other truths which are more immediately founded in divine revelation, and many duties which we owe to God as Christians, (which may be called Christian virtues, as contradistinguished from those which are stiled moral) so, as to pass them over, as though they were truths of no great importance, or unnecessary to be known and observed, in order to our salvation. Is the Person and glory of Christ to be esteem'd a needless subject? or his righteousness, which is the foundation of our hope of justification and right to eternal life, to be treated as though it were no other than an empty speculation, or a controversy, which has only a tendency to amuse

use the world, and set men at variance with one another; which suggestion is a great engine that the enemy of souls makes use of to fill the minds of men with prejudices against it, and a temptation to some to forbear to insist on this, and many other doctrines of the like importance. Is the life of faith, whereby we are to depend on Christ for all things, as well as give him that glory that is due to his name; or the doctrine of regeneration and conversion by the power of the Holy Ghost, to be treated as matters less necessary to be known by Christians? 'Tis well if some persons, by shunning to declare these and other doctrines, which contain the very sum and substance of the gospel, (though it may be they cannot be said directly to deny them) do not hereby give occasion to those who don't diligently search the scriptures, to disbelieve them, and thereby to depreciate divine revelation, or divest it of that which is its greatest beauty and glory. Thus concerning those qualifications that are necessary to denominate persons burning and shining lights, which respect their being endowed with the knowledge of scripture-doctrines, and their faithfulness in delivering them. We proceed to consider,

3. That they who are duly qualified for this work, must have a zeal for the glory of God, and compassion to the souls of men.

(1.) Zeal

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(1.) Zeal for the glory of God : That this may appear to be of a right kind, it ought to be temper'd with humility ; and must not only be a zeal according to knowledge, but disengaged from those exorbitant passions, whereby sometimes, under a pretence of exercising this grace, many discover their own corruptions, and pretend that the glory of God is an inducement hereunto ; when it is to be fear'd there is too great a mixture of private resentment, or unwarrantable prejudice, which very much sullies, debases, and casts reproach on this excellent endowment. As lukewarmness on the one hand, or an indifferency, with respect to the important truths of the gospel, or their being receiv'd or rejected, is a degree of unfaithfulness to Christ's interest, or at least, discovers that we have it not much at heart : So zeal, when it degenerates into rage and fury, and gives ground to conclude that there is a hatred to the person against whom it is exercised, is far from being contained in this qualification, which is necessary for the work of the ministry ; therefore, together with this there ought to be,

(2.) A great degree of compassion to the souls of men, whose spiritual and eternal welfare is principally design'd ; who are to be consider'd as persons who will be either help'd or hinder'd in their way heavenward, as we are faithful or negligent in those duties which we owe to them ; we are to look
up-

upon them as standing in need of admonition and instruction, if ignorant and out of the way ; or encouragement, if dispos'd to assent to, or embrace the gospel : The worth of souls, and the consequence of their adhering to it, should be an inducement to those who engage in this work to express that love to them, which will discover it self by their being earnestly solicitous to promote their highest welfare. And the prevalence of corruption, whereby men are prone to reject the means of grace, and thereby contract guilt, and expose themselves to everlasting ruin, calls for the greatest degree of compassion, and the most affectionate address to them, arising from an inward sensation of the misery which they bring on themselves, which will, if destitute of the grace of God, be the end of those who remain in a state of impenitency and unbelief.

This is to preach the truth in love, as well as to shine with a becoming lustre ; and to shew a due concern for those whom we look upon as objects of pity ; because going in the broad way to destruction. If sinners are willing vassals to Satan, serving divers lusts and pleasures, and bringing down on themselves swift destruction, and yet concluding that they are safe and happy ; treasuring up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and at the same time perswade themselves that the bitterness of death is past ;

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past ; such are doubtless objects of compassion ; and they who are called to deal with them, are not duly qualified for this work, unless they sympathize with them, as desirous to save them with fear, plucking them out of the burning ; beseeching them, as persons in the utmost danger, to believe in Christ, to the saving of the soul ; and to know the things that concern their everlasting peace and welfare.

Thus concerning the character and qualifications of those who are styl'd burning and shining lights in our text.

We shall now proceed to consider the issue and event of the exercise of their ministry, as favour'd with, or deny'd success ; and their usefulness as only continued for a season. There is a good hand of providence seen in God's bestowing those qualifications before mention'd, on such whom he designs for eminent service ; and the event and consequence hereof is also order'd by him. As he bestows those gifts which are necessary for the faithful discharge of this work, so he suits their ministry to the circumstances and tempers of those to whom he sends them ; and together with other gifts, he confers, or withholds, that which is necessary to the success hereof ; namely, the gift of acceptation, which is a superadded blessing, encouraging to them, as well as subservient to the good of those with whom they have a more immediate concern.

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The season of a minister's usefulness, as well as continuance in this world, is limited; some are continued many years in a capacity of service, as some of the prophets formerly were^v; while others, like *John*, are called off the stage in a few months: This is order'd by a wise and sovereign providence. And when God has done the work he design'd to do by them, he gives them a discharge from it; and then their course is finish'd; and the light which he had set up extinguish'd, as to what concerns this world, or are rather received to a better; where their ministry, as exercised in this, is not needed; and they, with the blessed Inhabitants thereof, partake of those glories which Christ has prepar'd for his faithful servants and followers.

As for what was before observ'd concerning the success of *John's* ministry, being abated before it was at an end; which is the principal sense of their being *willing to rejoice in his light but for a season*: We may

^v *Isaiab* prophesy'd above 62 Years, supposing him to have been call'd to that office in the last year of king *Uzziab*, and to have continued in it, as is generally receiv'd, till the reign of *Manasseh*; which makes that number of years, as appears by comparing *Isa.* i. 1. and Chap. vi. 1. with *2 Kings* xv. 2. Chap. xvi. 2. and Chap. xviii. 2. And *Hosea* prophesy'd, as most suppose, longer than this; for he was call'd to his office in the reign of *Jeroboam*, 14 years or more before *Uzziab* began to reign, *2 Kings* xiv. 23. compared with Chap. xv. 1. and he prophesy'd, during the reigns of *Jotham*, *Abaz* and *Hezekiah*, as *Isaiab* did; so that most suppose that he continued in his work 70 years or more.

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infer the ficklenefs and uncertainty of the tempers of men : A person may be highly esteem'd and carefs'd at one time, and his esteem run very low in the opinion of the world at another, when, it may be, his gifts are the same as before ; there may be no change in him, though there may in the tempers and sentiments of men concerning him : And we often find, that where God is pleas'd to deny a minister success, which he sometimes does, in a judicial way, for his own sins, or those of them to whom he ministers, this generally weakens his interest in their esteem, though his qualifications may not be in the least abated : But these are some of the hidden mysteries of providence, which cannot easily be accounted for, though they are to be submitted to ; and we are to learn from hence, that God is the Lord, and sovereign Disposer of all our usefulness, and does with, and by his people as seemeth good in his sight. Which leads us to consider,

III. How the words may be applied to the present melancholy occasion of our meeting together. I would not be thought to run a parallel between what has been observed concerning *John* the Baptist, and your deceased pastor, in many things that have been suggested concerning him, as agreeable to the scope and design of the words insisted on ; yet I am obliged to do justice

to the memory of him, whose labours you have lately been deprived of, (and am persuaded that you will readily concur with me herein) in applying that part of *Jobn's* character to him, who deserv'd it in as great a degree as most of the ministers in our day, *viz.* that he was a *burning and a shining light*. To say that he was, but is no more, is very afflictive to those that understood his real worth, and it gives us occasion to reflect on the vanity of human acquirements, abstracted from their subserviency to those impressions of usefulness, which they leave behind them when we are deprived of them; and this cannot but make those, who are the more immediate subjects of such an afflictive providence, consider the very great loss they have sustained, which is your case at this time; and not your's only, but, I may say, 'tis such in which other churches bear a very considerable share, as, in some measure, it affects the interest of Christ in general. When it pleases God to take away from churches, ministers that have obtain'd mercy to be faithful, it ought to be laid to heart by all, as a very afflictive stroke.

It will be expected that I should give some account of Mr. *Hurrian*, both as a minister and a Christian. He died in the *fifty sixth* year of his age, having been engaged in the work of the ministry, and particularly in that of a pastor for *thirty six* years, of which the greatest part were employ'd in ministring

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to a church in the country *, which he found in a low and declining condition, but, thro' the blessing of God attending his labours, they were brought into a very flourishing estate, and many of them were seals which God was pleased to give to his faithfulness in the work he was engaged in amongst them : His great abilities gain'd him also a very large share in the affections and esteem of several other churches in that and the neighbouring county. I need not say that his furniture for the ministry was very considerable, for that was visible to all that attended on it : But shall only take notice, that, some years before he came to *London*, he very much affected a recluse and sedentary life, in which he shut up himself from the world, unless, when he appeared in publick, on the Lord's days; and hardly convers'd with his own family, excepting in what respects the necessary duties belonging to it; but addicted himself to close study, by which means he gain'd a great stock of knowledge, tho' hereby he prejudiced his health, the declining state whereof soon appeared after this, and, for want of due exercise, subjected himself to a confluence of humours, which afterwards made him a burden to himself.

If we consider him as a Christian, he walk'd closely with God, and, for some

At *Denton* in *Norfolk*.

time,

time, kept a diary of what pass'd between God and his own soul, and recorded some remarkable occurrences of providence, as matter of thanksgiving, humiliation, and prayer: If we consider him in a relative capacity, he fill'd up every relation with its respective duties, and endeavour'd, to his utmost, to promote religion in his family, as well as by his ministry in the world.

Some have been ready to conclude, that his coming to *London*, especially considering his usefulness in the place, where he was situate, was one of the most unadvised steps he took in the conduct of his life: But this I am desir'd so far to exculpate him from, as to let the world know that it was done with the greatest deliberation. And it appears, from the diary which he left behind him, as above mentioned, that he kept between twenty and thirty private fasts to seek direction from God concerning this matter, before he determin'd to do it: And that which seem'd to influence him hereunto, was the hope which he had that his ministry, being employ'd in a different part of the world, a new scene of usefulness might be opened; and, being called to succeed one who had been eminently useful in that station, cast himself on the providence of God, earnestly desiring that he might be made so; and especially apprehending that it might conduce to the peace
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and welfare of those that called him, and the preventing a breach which they fear'd would ensue, if he refused to comply. This was the principal thing that determined him; and how far this end has been answer'd, you are the best judges who were his immediate care.

It is upwards of *seven* years since he came to this city; his infirm constitution render'd him very unfit for the constant discharge of his ministerial work; but that was a grief and an affliction to him, not a crime.

As to what concerns his publick performances, you cannot but be sensible that his doctrine was agreeable to the truth of the gospel; he endeavour'd in the whole course of his ministry to magnify the blessed Jesus; so that he determined, with the apostle, to *know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified*^a. His doctrine was uncorrupt, and self-consistent; he did not with one hand pluck down what he built up with the other; and he insisted on the great truths of the gospel, not only with clearness, or without ambiguity of words, but with judgment. His style was masculine, his words well put together; and as to the consequence of his ministry, he led you, and others, to whom he preached, into the knowledge of the great and deep things of God. When he insisted on practical mat-

^a 1 Cor. ii. 2.

ters, it was with the greatest plainness and address to the consciences of men, in recommending experimental truths. When he endeavour'd to establish his hearers in the great doctrines of the gospel, on which our faith and hope is built, (which he did not do occasionally, but made them the principal subject of his ministry) he did it with the greatest strength of argument; and he bent his mind mostly to confirm the faith of his hearers, in that which we may call, with the apostle, *The present truth*^b, and had a tendency to convince gainsayers. This we have had a sufficient *specimen* of, in what he has already published, and some other discourses, which he left behind him, will, as it is to be hoped, soon appear in print; particularly those in which he defended the Deity, Personality, and work of the Holy Ghost, which were some of his last performances; and he occasionally express'd a desire to live no longer than till he had finish'd them; and to this he designed to have added the publication of some other discourses concerning the reign of sin and grace, and the obligations that we are under to practical religion from the abounding of the grace of God.

His afflictions, which were his daily monitors, that made him thoughtful about his great change, seem'd to have had a good effect upon him: He would sometimes com-

^b 2 Pet. i. 12.

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pare himself to a ship that had passed through many storms and tempests, but was now drawing near to its desired haven. When he was in the more immediate prospect of death, he often express'd his entire resignation to the will of God, and composure of mind, in the view which he had of that awful change, without expressing the least murmuring or repining thought, concluding that God knew what was best for him. The frame of his spirit was even and composed, not lifted up in an extraordinary manner, with transport and raptures of joy on the one hand; nor, on the other, cast down, or sinking under the burthen and weight of fear and dejection of spirit. There is one thing I cannot but remark, which he desired should be communicated to the world, that he died in the firm perswasion and belief of those great doctrines which he had preached, and maintained, without the least hesitation or staggering, and that he found more sweetness and comfort in them, in his last sickness, than ever he had done before. These were the guide, rule, and support of his faith in life; and it pleased God, by them, to send him great relief in death; upon these accounts it is that I cannot think my self chargeable with injustice to his character, or excess therein, when I stile him *a burning and shining light*.

When it pleased God to bring him to this city, we hoped, that since he was so

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well qualified for that important trust, which was repos'd in him, that he would have continued an happy instrument in God's hand for the building up of this church, as it before had a faithful pastor; who, for many years, labour'd with great success, and extensive usefulness: But it pleased the all-wise God, who is the sovereign Disposer of all things, to order it otherwise. I doubt not but you rejoiced in his light; but it was certainly, in this respect, but for a short season. As to his zeal for the glory of God, that was very remarkable, and it had in it a becoming mixture of prudence; the interest and glory of Christ lay nearest his heart; and you are his witnesses, that he did not shun to declare the whole counsel of God: therefore we may well conclude concerning him, that he had obtained mercy from God to be faithful.

Now since it has pleased the great God, who gives no account of his matters to any one, to order it so, that you should be as sheep, having no shepherd, let me first offer a few words of advice to you; and then something to those who are more immediately concern'd in this great loss.

As to what respects this church, which has pass'd through various changes of providence, having sometimes been toss'd as with a tempest, and not comforted; at other times rejoicing in those great things which God has done for it, which they looked not

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for;

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for ; I can reckon this no other than a time of mourning, agreeable to a state of widowhood ; and the effect that it ought to have upon you, should be to give occasion to great searchings of heart ; whether you have improv'd the ministerial labours of your late worthy pastor, as you ought to have done ? whether those great and important truths, which he has often insisted on, on which the faith, the hope, the joy, and safety of believers, is founded, have made a deep impression on your spirits ; so that you have seen the beauty and glory of the gospel, and admired the divine perfections, as shining forth therein ? and whether you have been disposed practically to improve them to the glory of God, and your own spiritual advantage ? Can you say that you are the epistles of the Holy Ghost, seen and read of all men ? Have they, whose ministry you have enjoy'd, either for a longer or shorter space of time, come to you in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ ? Do you retain the favour and impressive influences thereof upon your spirits, whereby their memory remains precious to you ? Have you entertain'd those admonitions and reproofs, which have been just, with such tenderness of heart, as that sin has hereby been render'd more odious, and you fill'd with shame and confusion of face for it ? Have you trembled when the wrath of God has been presented to your view ; and has the power of his anger,

which

which is equal to his fear, induced you to flee from the wrath to come? Have the motives taken from the love of Christ to perishing sinners, been effectual to perswade you to close with, and give up your selves entirely to him; and the promises of the gospel been received with the greatest thankfulness, and improv'd to establish your consolation in Christ? When you have been press'd to perform the duties incumbent on you, and to exercise those graces which are necessary thereunto; have you, thro' the blessing of God attending such perswasive arguments, been enabled, with the greatest readiness, to yield your selves to God, and to have respect unto all his commandments?

Let me farther put you upon enquiring whether you make advances in grace, or decline and go backward in your Christian course? I hope there are many among you, like fruitful trees, which have been planted in a soil well adapted thereunto. Some, it may be, have too much reason to complain of their barrenness, their leanness and unprofitableness under the means of grace, which is a complaint almost universal in our day. Whether the great God may not, for this, take away faithful ministers from us, we know not; but whatever may have an immediate tendency to draw forth the divine displeasure herein, there is certainly ground for humiliation, and a due sense of sin, which such afflictive providences loudly call for.

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And let me farther add, that since the residue of the Spirit is with God, (who has bless'd you with a succession of faithful pastors, and never left you destitute of the labours of those who have, either statedly or occasionally, been helpers of your faith and joy in Christ,) he can direct you to another; therefore be importunate with him, who is the God of the spirits of all flesh, that he would raise up and point out to you a man that may go out and in before you, that may feed you with knowledge and understanding; that the Lord of the harvest would, by the good steps of his providence, go before you in this great and important affair, and shew you the man whom he shall choose, and send amongst you, as a publick blessing, whereby this breach may be made up, to his glory, and your great edification.

And let me entreat you, that you would stedfastly adhere to the doctrines of the gospel, those doctrines that, for many years past, you have been train'd up in the knowledge of; depart not from that *simplicity that is in Christ*. We live in an age in which many persons are inclin'd to give up those truths which our fore-fathers earnestly contended for, and loved beyond their lives. God grant that you may have the same Spirit, that you may exercise an equal degree of zeal for, and love to the truth, as it is in Jesus; and then you may encourage your selves to hope, that God will, in his

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own time, make your way plain before your faces.

I shall now more immediately address my self to those who were related in the bonds of nature, and cannot but more sensibly feel the weight of this afflictive providence. The widow and fatherless are expressions used, in scripture, to denote a state of life, that is, for the most part, destitute of its best enjoyments; nevertheless, it has some great and precious promises to encourage the faith of those who seek that in God, which they have lost in the creature. Permit me to recommend to you, who was one with himself, the partner of his joys and cares, and, I trust, the Helper of his faith, a due improvement of those blessings which you enjoy'd in such a relation: And I cannot but remind you of the great favour which God confer'd on you, in your descent from a family which express'd the greatest love to and esteem for the gospel of Christ, and, in the most perilous times, afforded a constant shelter to those who preach'd it; and, as a farther evidence hereof, had the greatest satisfaction in adding two ministers to it; one of which has, for many years, been useful in a part of Christ's vineyard^b; the other is now removed from this church and you.

^b The Reverend Mr. Thomas Wickes, pastor of a church in Watsfield, Suffolk.

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That your love to and concern for the ministry may be constantly maintained, you need look no farther than the two branches of your family, which your deceased husband had the pleasure to see engaged in that work, with promising hope of great usefulness therein. And it is evident, that he designed, at the same time, to express that great love which he bore to you, and the sense he had of that affection in you, which the bonds of nature would suggest, by putting them into a state of dependence on your justice and goodness; and left the world with this satisfaction, that he might confide in you, as the guardian of his love to them, and the promoter of their future happiness: And as they have not been chargeable with any known defect of duty to you, and their deceased parent, I am perswaded that a religious sense of your obligation, to endeavour to make their lives comfortable, as ministers and children, will not only be thought agreeable to the relation in which you stand to them; but that you will esteem it the highest instance of respect that you can shew to your deceased husband. May God make up this loss to you, by honouring your sons with equal qualifications and usefulness with their tender father, that, by this means, you may be comforted in seeing the advantage which many may gain by their ministry; and may all grace abound towards you, from him who has promised to be a Father

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to the fatherless, and an Husband to the widow, in his holy habitation.

I shall now conclude with a few words to you, who are deprived of a father, that was glad of the occasion providence offer'd to him, to dedicate you to his service in that important work, in which he had the satisfaction to see you engaged. Let me earnestly intreat you to be followers of him, as he was of the Lord; and to consider, that it is not a small privilege to have had such a pattern before you. May God give you a double portion of his Spirit, that you may have an experimental taste of that grace which you recommend to others, and be kept stedfast in that faith which was once delivered to the saints, being filled with a great concern for the Redeemer's glory and interest, and spirited more and more for his service, and then you may hope that you shall be greatly succeeded and encouraged in the work, how difficult soever it may appear to be: Labour after greater qualifications for it, by close application to the study of the holy scriptures, and fervent prayer, that you may make advances in the knowledge of those doctrines, whereby you may be farther able to instruct others; and that you may recommend the ways of God by a conversation becoming the gospel, that so your deceased parent may, as it were, live in you, and his name and memory be kept

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kept up by your usefulness in Christ's vineyard. This will, in some measure, make up the loss that the interest of Christ has sustained; and you may have a comfortable prospect of a blessing from God accompanying you, which will tend very much to alleviate your sorrow upon this occasion, and be ground of great thankfulness and praise to God on your behalf. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, earnestly desiring that you may approve your selves workmen, that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.



F I N I S